USDA Forest Service
Fire and Aviation Management
Briefing Paper

Date: July 24, 2008

Topic: Status of Incident Business Solutions

Background: In 2004 the Forest Service made the commitment to modify systems and processes to perform incident business with fewer people and more accurate data in a way that promotes interagency collaboration, increases accountability and improves efficiency.

Update: Many systems have been deployed, while others are still in development. Following is the latest status on each system and other relevant information:

◆ **Virtual Incident Procurement (VIPR) System: VIPR is web-based acquisition application which allows:**
1. **Vendors**: to submit offers and sign preseason agreements
2. **Inspectors:** to certify that equipment requirements have been met
3. **Contracting Officers:** to issue competitive solicitations, award, and administer preseason agreements for the life of the agreement, usually 3-years
4. **Dispatchers:** to receive dispatch priority lists

Current Status & Upcoming Events
- VIPR is now in system design and development
- Data migration of existing, on-going agreements is scheduled for November 2008
- EaTIS (used in Regions 1, 5 & 6) will be decommissioned effective September 30, 2008
    - Data from EaTIS will be made available for use until migration is complete
- The legacy EERA-DB will soon be inoperable due to OMB mandated settings being deployed by the CIO; data will be made available until pertinent information is migrated
- VIPR functionality to support preseason incident BPAs* is scheduled for deployment in November 2008
    - A "soft deployment" is planned where regions will be phased-in
- Training for Contracting Officers will take place from early December 2008 – February 2009 following the phase-in plan:
    - Regions 3, 8, 9 – December 9 (Albuquerque)
    - Regions 1, 5, 6 – January 8 (Portland)
    - Regions 2, 4 - February 3 (Lakewood)

More information about VIPR is posted to the FS intranet at: http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/aqm/incident/vipr/ or the internet at: http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/vipr.php

◆ ***I-BPAs: New Name for preseason EERAs** (Emergency Equipment Rental Use Agreement)
As AQM implements policy to bring preseason incident procurements into compliance with OIG recommendations and the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), there becomes a need to differentiate between agreements awarded preseason and those that are signed-up at-incident, therefore:
- I-BPA = preseason, non-emergency, SF-1449
- EERA = at-incident, emergency, OF-294

Use of the SF-1449 to award preseason agreements aligns with FAR and is an OMB approved form. The BPA (Blanket Purchase Agreement) is an instrument defined by FAR. In addition, the Incident Payment Center at the ASC B&F, Incident Finance Branch will immediately know which set of provisions to consult, thus lessening the amount of time to research any problems. VIPR will deal with all I-BPAs; EERAs will be handled manually.

Don't try to pronounce it...just say **Preseason Incident BPA** *or* **Incident BPA** *or* **I-BPA** *for short.*

- **Associated AQM/FAM Process Changes:** Also in compliance with FAR, competitive solicitations are being done by Regions in accordance with a national solicitation plan for preseason agreements. In 2008, seven (7) categories of equipment were competed: GIS Units, Clerical Support Units, Fallers, Mobile Laundry, Tents, Mechanics with Service Truck, and Refrigerated Trailers. With the adoption of consistent, national specifications, equipment typing may have changed (e.g., there are now four (4) types of tents). These changes are being incorporated into ROSS; therefore, incident personnel should become familiar with the new typing to ensure accurate resource orders are placed. Ordering of all resources awarded as a result of competitive solicitations must be accomplished by utilizing a dispatch priority list that ranks equipment by best value. Lists are posted on a local website; for more information, please contact your Regional Fire CO. In 2009 competitive solicitations will be issued for heavy equipment with transport, transports, potable and gray water trucks, hand washing stations, and portable toilets. Comments on draft solicitations may be submitted to **vrdpist@fs.fed.us** by **September 15 (**http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/solicitations.php).

- **Contractor Performance System (CPS): CPS is being used for contractor performance evaluations under both I-BPAs and EERAs. Use of the system will provide a standardized method for evaluating and collecting performance information.   It is required for use by all USDA agencies and is available government-wide to facilitate interagency operations.**
    1. FAM is responsible for completing evaluations for all contract equipment at an incident, specifically the position who supervises the equipment at-incident.
    2. AQM will ensure information is entered into CPS.
    3. The new form is in the cache and filed at http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/eera.php
    4. Please replace the old form in your kit.

- **Incident Business Systems (IBS): Incident Business Systems include the Aviation Business System (ABS) and the Incident Business Database (IBDB). IBS has been in production for a full year (June 1, 2007 – June 1, 2008). The IBS has improved the effectiveness, efficiency and accuracy of the following areas:**
    - Paperless processing of aviation payments and cost reporting in the Forest Service Accounting System.
    - Electronic transmission of I-BPA/EERA invoices from fire camp (I-Suite) to the ASC B&F, Incident Finance Branch (IBDB).
    - Electronic transmission of Casual Pay time from fire camp (I-Suite) to the DOI Federal Personnel Payment System (FPPS) to be processed by the ASC B&F, Incident Finance Branch.
    - 2008 Goals/Priorities for IBS are as follows:
        - Permanently bring prompt payment interest into compliance with Office of Management and Budget metric (greater than 98% of payments not containing prompt payment interest and less than 2% amount paid in prompt payment interest).

- Permanently bring timely payment processing into compliance with Forest Service Customer Service Level Agreement of 5 days or less.
- Pay vendors timely and reduce vendor contacts.
- Stabilize and implement additional fixes and enhancements to ABS and IBDB to make them more efficient, accurate and user friendly.
- Support the Forest Service Green Initiative by expanding paperless payment process for I-BPAs/EERAs.

◆ **Aviation Business System (ABS): The Aviation Business System enables aviation (helicopters, fixed wing, air tanker) managers to create electronic FS-6500-122s (Aviation Use Invoices).**
- Working as designed
- FS-6500-122s are created, accrued and electronically gathered for approval by Contracting Officers (or CORs) and Vendors. Data is electronically transmitted to the ASC B&F, Incident Finance Branch.
    - ABS acquires aircraft rate information from the EaV data input application to populate the FS-6500-122 invoice.
    - 27,314 invoices were generated and paid via ABS from May 1 through September 30, 2007.
    - Costs for full service retardant must continue to be e-faxed to the ASC B&F, Incident Finance Branch at 866-816-9532 on a daily basis or entered on the FS-6500-122 including the gallons, and total cost by the data entry operator in the ABS application. ABS does not calculate the retardant if gallons of usage are entered without a total cost.
    - Users no longer enter duplicative data into multiple systems with the exception of continuation of the current manual process of entering Forest Service owned aircraft data into AMIS.
    - Training and FAQs developed continue to be updated and posted on the ABS webpage for field access. www.fs.fed.us/business/abs/
    - The ABS Help Desk is providing excellent user support.

For further information on ABS, contact Marylea Lockard at mlockard@fs.fed.us

◆ **Incident Business Database (IBDB): This database manages the work processes required for accruing incident costs, processing payments and submitting financial data to the Forest Service accounting system. It resides at and is used by the ASC B&F, Incident Finance Branch.**
- 2007/2008 payments are processed electronically or manually, based upon how payment data is received. Data is accepted from I-Suite and ABS and processed within IBDB and uploaded into the Forest Service accounting system.

For further information on IBDB, contact Marylea Lockard at mlockard@fs.fed.us

◆ **Related Systems: I-Suite, while not part of Incident Business Solutions, is integral to incident business systems. It's used by Incident Management Teams (IMTs) to for a variety of incident related activities including preparing the incident action plan, tracking equipment / personnel time and tracking costs during an incident. Local units are encouraged to utilize I-Suite for entering and submitting casual pay and equipment time for incidents not managed by IMTs.**
For further information on I-Suite, go to http://isuite.nwcg.gov